REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicants thank the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Claims 1 through 28 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 11, 14, 23 and 25 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from Claims 1, 11, 14, 23 and 25. Applicant has amended claims 6, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23 and 25. Applicant has cancelled claims 12 and 24.

Objections in the Claims:

Claim 6 was objected to because of informalities. Applicants have amended this claim to correct the informalities

Rejections to the Claims:

Claims 1-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Northcutt et al. (U.S. Patent Application No.: 20030126001). Applicants respectfully traverse the examiner's assertions.

The examiner asserts that Northcutt teaches each element of claim 1 except Northcutt fails to explicitly teach the step of sending service requests to a plurality of service ticketing systems. The examiner further asserts that Northcutt does teach a plurality of interfaces that can be used to retrieve, view, modify or edit service requests. The examiner asserts that Northcutt discloses sending service requests status to a plurality of interfaces. The examiner explains that the advantage of sending service requests to a plurality of service ticketing system is that it enables users to view updated data and changes made to data.

Applicants' present invention provides an efficient method and system to manage service requests across multiple service request systems. This management method involves merging all service requests from multiple systems into standard system, sorting the request according to some standard and presenting a display list of all of the requests having a common characteristic to a technician or requester. Service requests are

gathered from many different backend-ticketing systems and presented to the technicians in a single logical view. Service requests gathered from each backend ticketing system are packaged in an XML document format. The efficient use of a common XML format is an efficient way to manage all service requests from all backend-ticketing systems. These service requests can be sorted by ticket open or close date/time, status, severity of problem, etc. in ascending or descending order and be presented to the technicians in a single logical view. These requests are presented in a display as a single logical view of service requests from different backend systems.

Northcutt describes a system and method for managing the workflow of request for services from a department within an organization, the requests for service being provided by other members of the organization. A request for service input module enables one or more requesting members of the organization to input information for a request for service from the department by connecting to the system over a network (e.g., an intranet). A database system stores information regarding the requests for service received by the request for service input module. A change of status input module enables a service provider participant from the department to update the status of a request by connecting to the system over a network. A signoff module enables a service provider participant and a requesting member to signoff a requested service, the participant and requesting member connecting to the system over a network.

Contrasting Figure 3 of the Applicants' present invention with Figure 1 of Northcutt can illustrate the difference between Northcutt and the present invention. Applicants' present invention receives a status request from a browser at a central location and then retrieves information that is stored in remote or distributed locations in the backend ticketing system. Because of the distributed information, there is an internally generated request. This request is generated and sent by the gateway manager internally and not by the user. This request goes to the ticketing systems. Information from the ticketing systems is received by the gateway manager and merged into one list for the requesting user. In Northcutt, the information is centrally stored in the centralized workflow management system 10 (not the distributed system of the present invention). Figure 1 of Northcutt shows the types of queries 14, 16 and 18 that can be sent and the

types of information 20, 22 and 24 that the system produces. In Northcutt, because the information is centrally located, there is no need to generate a query to send out to another location.

With regard to claim 1, Applicants claim a step of: formulating and sending a service request status message to a plurality of service ticketing systems from the service manager. In Applicants' invention, this request is from the gateway manager to the ticketing systems. In Northcutt, it appears that the requests are going from the interfaces to the central location. This approach is opposite of Applicants' present invention. In Applicants' invention, the ticketing systems (41, 42, 43 and 44) are used for users to make service requests. However, a service person wanting to get a status of the number of service request for they are responsible will access a browser 51. In Northcutt, the interfaces are analogous to the ticketing systems of Applicants' present invention. Northcutt does not have and does not need a query going from the central manager to the interfaces. Therefore, Northcutt does not have and does not need a step of merging information from various interfaces.

In short, Northcutt describes a system whether the users making service requests check on these requests and make changes to these requests. In Applicants' present invention, the service technician makes inquiries about the number of requests (jobs) that that technician needs to address (resolve).

In claim 1, examiner asserts that Northcutt describes the formulating and sending step of Applicants' invention. Examiner cites paragraphs 53-55, 59-63 and 65-67 to support this assertion. However, these paragraphs do not describe this step in claim 1 of Applicants' invention. Further, Northcutt does not describe the receiving and merging step of the present invention in paragraph 0072.

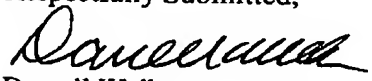
In order to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, there has to be a suggestion or teaching to modify (combine) the references. If there is no teaching, there is no prima facia case for obviousness. In the present case, there is no teaching or suggestion in Northcutt to suggest the implementation of Applicants' present invention. As mentioned, Northcutt describes access by users to a central location through the interfaces whereas Applicants' present invention describes access through browser and

central manager to information in distributed locations. Because the configurations of Applicants' present invention and Northcutt appear to be opposite, Applicants submit that it is not obvious to produce Applicants' present invention in view of Northcutt.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the art of record (alone or in combination) teaches, discloses or even suggests the invention as recited in each of Applicant's claims. Applicant further submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejections and passage to issuance is respectfully requested.

Applicant believes this reply to be fully responsive to all outstanding issues and place this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully Submitted,



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